

Washington, D.C. - House Democratic Minority Leader Richard Gephardt announced today that he has appointed Congresswoman Betty McCollum (St. Paul - D) to the National Council on the Arts, the advisory board of the National Endowment for the Arts, as his representative from the U.S. House of Representatives.

Congresswoman McCollum called the appointment a great privilege. **"I am thrilled to offer Minnesota's leadership, commitment and excellence in the arts as a national model. I want to help broader and more diverse audiences in every urban, suburban and rural community in America have greater access to artists and arts organizations in their everyday lives**,"
McCollum said.

The National Council on the Arts advises the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) on agency policies and programs. It reviews and makes recommendations on applications for grants, funding guidelines, and leadership initiatives. Fourteen members of the Council are appointed by the President and approved by the Senate for six-year, staggered terms. Six members of Congress, two appointed by the Speaker of the House, one by the Minority Leader of the House, two by the Majority Leader of the Senate, and one by the Minority Leader of the Senate, serve for two-year terms.

Congresswoman McCollum's appointment to the National Council on the Arts is important to Minnesota since the state ranks fifth in per capita receipts from the NEA.

Robert Booker, Executive Director of the Minnesota State Arts Board, said, "We are extremely pleased with Congresswoman McCollum's appointment. With her leadership, artists and arts organizations will receive greater recognition for their important contributions to the fabric of American life, and citizens will enjoy access to a greater, more vibrant array of arts activities. Minnesota is extremely fortunate to be represented on the National Council, and we couldn't ask for a better advocate and champion than Betty McCollum."